

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5823

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, UN, PLO

SUBJECT: SYRIAN PRESS COMMENTARY ON JAN. 12

SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE

1. SUMMARY: SYRIAN PRESS REPORTING JAN. 10-12 HIGHLIGHTED IMPORTANCE OF IMMINENT SC DEBATE AND WARNED OF RENEWED INCREASE IN TENSION IF PRACTICAL MEASURES NOT TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT U.N. RESOLUTIONS AIMED AT ACHIEVING PEACE. LOCAL MEDIA COMMENTATOR TOLD EMBOFF TO EXPECT SHARP INCREASE IN CRITICISM OF U.S. IF VETO IMPOSED. END SUMMARY.

2. SYRIAN PRESS JAN. 10-12 FOCUSED ATTENTION ON IMMINENT JAN. 12 SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE. AL-THAWRAH NOTED SC DISCUSSIONS "WILL CONCENTRATE ON FINDING COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OF ME QUESTION." AL-BAATH STRESSED THAT "SYRIAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY NOW AIMS TOWARD IMPLEMENTING RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY U.N. CONCERNING ME PALESTINE ISSUE. SYRIAN DIPLOMACY IS (WORKING FOR) SC ADOPTION OF RES. SUPPORTING

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THESE RIGHTS AND FIXING TIMETABLE

FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION."

3. AL-BAATH COLUMNIST HIGHLIGHTED ATTENDANCE OF PLO "FOR FIRST TIME AT SC MEETINGS," AND ASCRIBED THIS TO SYRIAN EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN CAUSE. AL-THAWRAH COLUMNIST WARNED THAT "TENSION WILL RISE ONCE AGAIN IN THE AREA UNLESS SC ADOPTS PRACTICAL MEASURES GUARANTEEING REALIZATION OF JUST PEACE." HE ADDED THAT "A SIMPLE CHANGE OR AMENDMENT OF A CERTAIN RES. CANNOT ALONE BE WAY TO JUST PEACE."

4. MAJOR PRONOUNCEMENT WAS JAN. 12 AL-BAATH FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL WHICH ASSERTED FOLLOWING POINTS:

A) "TODAY SC BEGINS DISCUSSIONS OF PALESTINE QUESTION AS CORE OF ARAB-ZIONIST CONFLICT."

B) IMPLEMENTATION BY SC OF PALESTINIAN RIGHT OF RETURN AND RIGHT TO ESTABLISH INDEPENDENT STATE "AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDES AMENDMENT TO SC RESES. 242 AND 338 SINCE IT SURPASSES THEM CONSIDERABLY. SC REQUESTED TO TRANSLATE THIS DEVELOPMENT INTO NEW RES."

C) SYRIA HAS TURNED TO SC AS PEACE FORUM BECAUSE "BY VIRTURE OF ITS CHARTER IT IS SUPPOSED TO IMPLEMENT U.N. RESES. SC MAJORITY BECOMES PARTY TO DISPUTE EVEN IF U.S. USES VETO AND EVEN IF CONCERTED POSITION BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL CONTINUES."

D) NEW SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN APPROACH "RETURNS ISSUES TO THEIR NATURAL AND OBJECTIVE SITUATION, TO PRE-PARTITION STAGE, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY TO MOMENT IN WHICH ZIONIST ENTITY WAS ADMITTED TO U.N. CONDITIONALLY ON BASIS OF ACCEPTING U.N. CHARTER."

E) WARNING AGAINST "LARGE FORCES WHOSE NEUTRALITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT.", EDITORIAL NOTED THAT SOME PARTIES INVOLVED IN ISSUE MIGHT TRY TO SOW CONFUSION DURING DEBATE.

5. TASS STATEMENT OUTLINING
FFICIAL SOVIET
POSTURE ON EVE OF SC DEBATE GIVEN FRONT PAGE
ATTENTION IN SYRIAN PRESS.

6. SYRIAN MEDIA COMMENTATOR TOLD EMBOFF JAN. 11
THAT SYRIAN PRESS INTENTIONALLY SOFT PEDALING
TREATMENT OF U.S. IN PRE-JAN. 12 PERIOD. IF U.S.
VETOED SYRIAN DRAFT RESOLUTION, HE WARNED, WE WOULD
BE IN FOR SHARP INCREASE IN MEDIA CRITICISM OF U.S.
IN SYRIA.
MURPHY

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